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ABSTRACT

This conference paper reports a search for information about research on continuing education in New Zealand carried out by people working in or with organizations and agencies usually classified as educational or for research related to those agencies. A section on information sources used is followed by one discussing trends in research. Four major studies with broad implications are then addressed. A final section discusses gaps in the research, as indicated by materials provided in the appendixes. These appendixes, which amount to approximately two-thirds of the paper, include (1) references: (2) outline of agencies providing continuing education, both national organizations and regional and local ones: (3) statistics tables with information indicating changes in emphases and expenditures in various post-school sectors: (4) listing of research projects in continuing education that were located by questionnaire: and (5) analysis of continuing education studies identified in the lists of unpublished degree and diploma studies for 1970-79. (YLB)

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Research on Continuing Education in New Zealand

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TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC) AND USERS OF THE ERIC SYSTEM."

Any survey of research in continuing education requires that there be an initial definition of the terms used. In the present circumstances we have tried to keep this to the minimum commensurate with the task and the enforced brevity of a conference paper. Not everyone will agree with our definitions but they are needed, if only to avoid confusions which might otherwise arise.

Continuing education we define in the broadest way as that education which is pursued by people who have left school and who are no longer required to attend it. This definition includes formal as well as informal kinds of education, as well as any that is specifically vocational, but it excludes, for the most part, that large field of post secondary formal education (especially the kind that takes place in universities) which is usually called 'higher education'. We recognise that this is an arbitrary decision.

We have also side-stepped the even larger area which is often called 'adult learning'. There are two reasons for this. First, 'adult learning' is a term of somewhat ambiguous usage, referring either to all forms of adult learning, whether in institutions or otherwise (for example, 'self directed' adult learning) or, more specifically, to the

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field of adult teaching (methodology) and adult learning (psychology). The second reason is that it would be impossible to deal with 'adult learning' adequately within a paper of this length.

The term 'continuing education' has been used, instead of the perhaps more traditional 'adult education', in order to avoid those unfortunate overtones of the past that have implied the latter to be the playground of 'hobbiests' or cultural 'dabblers'.

Terms such as 'lifelong education' or 'recurrent education' have been avoided as well, partly because of the difficulties of definition, partly because they appear to identify philosophies or approaches to continuing education rather than a category or sub-category of educational experience.

As for 'research', we have defined this as any study of practice or policy, past or present, of a descriptive or evaluative nature.

We have assumed that there is no great purpose to be attained in arguing what does or does not constitute 'education' although, as a number of writers have pointed out, this is an especially confusing and important problem in some areas of continuing education; nor has any attention been given to that long-standing bone of contention - the education versus training issue. In fact, when education becomes involved in community action, it becomes quite arbitrary and often depends on what agency is involved, as to whether this activity is categorised as 'education', 'recreation', 'community development', 'social welfare' or under any one of a number of other labels.

Our approach has been to look for information about research carried out by people working in or with organisations and agencies usually classified as educational - or for research related to those agencies. For this reason we have not included (as we might have done) such studies as those of leisure patterns and their use undertaken for the Ministry of Recreation and Sport, even though these may be a mine of information for people working in some fields of continuing education; nor have we included such statistical information as might be obtained from the Department of Labour on occupations and employment.

Information Sources

The principal printed source is undoubtedly Roger Boshier's *Adult and Continuing Education in New Zealand: 1851-1878: A Bibliography*. The serious student will discover, however, that excellent as this work is, it provides

no more than a sketch map of the territory - and one that can be substantially expanded with only a modicum of effort. This, of course, is probably what Boshier intended. But even if one leaves aside work in progress at the time of the compilation and now completed, and other work too recent to have been picked up, there are enough worthwhile items unrecorded to swell any second edition to twice the size of the present volume.

Continuing Education in New Zealand, the journal of the National Council of Adult Education, Wellington, is published twice yearly and is the other major source of current material. But, as a useful article by D.M. Guy published in the October 1976 issue suggested, research articles appear much less frequently in *Continuing Education* than they do in comparable American and British journals. Fewer than 4 percent of the New Zealand articles appearing over a 4 year period could be classified as research while over a similar period about 80 percent of the articles appearing in a comparable American journal, and nearly 30 percent in a British equivalent, could be so classified.

Another essential source consists of the invaluable bibliography of unpublished studies compiled by Keith Pickens and published in the *New Zealand Journal of Educational Studies,* Vol. 10, No. 2; Vol. 11; Vol. 14, No. 1. We also consulted *In-progress Degree and Diploma Studies, 1979,* NZARE, 1979.

Trends in Research

We next set ourselves the task of finding out what kind of research has been carried out over the past few years (or is still in progress), to identify the directions it is taking, and (if possible) to indicate the most profitable of those directions. There was no intention of assessing the quality of the research, but rather a hope that it might be possible to decide where the *terra incognita* (the largely uncharted aspects of continuing education research) might lie.

Appendix D lists the research projects we located. If the data had been available, it would have very likely been useful to carry out a longitudinal study of the research patterns themselves. Certainly there is no doubt that the pattern of continuing education, as of post-school education and training as a whole, has altered radically in the last decade. In this respect, Appendix C presents information indicating the changes in emphases and expenditure that have occurred in the various post-school sectors during the latter half of this period. The most significant trend, of course, has been the rapid growth in the technical institute/community college sector. Another highly significant change has been the equally rapid growth of the distance education agencies (Correspondence School, Technical Correspondence Institute, and Massey University's Center for Extramural Studies) which between them currently serve close to 50,000 people. In fact, an interesting project for a researcher, or assiduous student, would be to list the research studies chronologically, in order to determine the extent to which they reflect the changes that have occurred in the patterns of provision.

On the evidence available, however, it is already clear that there is currently little relationship between the shape of post-school education and the pattern of research concerning such education. Put simply, no one merely looking at a compiled list of research topics (or for that matter even at published descriptive material) could deduce the relative weightings of the various provisions for continuing education. The pattern is quite arbitrary, spasmodic and patchy.

Even if we exclude from 'continuing education' the field of parent education (as falling typically within the early childhood field, where it has been concentrated) the research material remaining is plainly opportunist, and the result of the particular interests of particular people or groups, at particular times.

The establishment of an Adult Learning Unit as a section of the New Zealand Council for Educational Research is another significant development even though the unit has not been in existence long enough to have made any particular contribution. It should, however, become a major link in the research system as a whole, and eventually serve as an instigator and source of studies not able to be readily or conveniently carried out elsewhere.

Major Studies With Broad Implications

Few research studies of a rigorous and statistical kind have been produced as yet. But of those available four are particularly noteworthy:

1. Roger Boshier's clientele study of three Wellington agencies.
2. The UNESCO/Canterbury University Extension Studies survey of Christchurch.
3. The study of continuing education by the Departments of Education and Statistics.
4. The Massey University study of dropout in extramural students.

The principal outcome of these studies is that some kind of data base is beginning to emerge from them, and that this provides a starting point from which other developments in research can be launched. The Boshier study is the most sophisticated in terms of methodology, but the Massey University extramural study approximates it, and bears some relationship to the same issues. Similarly, the two survey studies also form a matching pair and preliminary data from the national survey broadly confirms the patterns found in the Canterbury study. Of greater interest, however, is the extent to which the categories used in the national survey will prove of value in further analysis and in follow-up research. It has categorised various forms of 'agency directed learning activities' - that is, identified a wide range of learning activities organised to the extent that the learner has been enrolled with, or has been dependent on, a teacher either in a formal agency or otherwise. The preliminary analysis seems to be demonstrating both the virtues and the defects of such a broad survey. One major defect seems to be that even with a statistically significant national sample, some categories into which the data have been assigned have proved so gross that the conclusions drawn from them are too generalised to be useful. The narrower base of the UNESCO/ Canterbury study, on the other hand, permits more precise conclusions to be reached.

There are, however, changes taking place. The fact that the Department of Education has been able to engage in research programming and has begun to sponsor or undertake organised evaluative studies has been significantly linked to some recent developments in the continuing education field. We note for example the studies of extended trade training, of adult students in secondary schools, of nursing education in technical

institutes, of the Hawkes Bay Community College, the Wairarapa Community Action Programme and the survey of school leavers in the Rotorua area. It cannot yet be said that these (and other similar studies) constitute anything like a systematic means of evaluating developments, but they do permit a significantly broader perspective than was possible a decade ago. Assessment of important developments has been undertaken by other agencies as well. We note in particular the Vocational Training Council's field study of extended trade training, and the recent and excellent Massey University study of dropouts from extramural studies. Useful work has also been carried out by the Armed Services and the Police.

Gaps in the Research

Appendix D lists the information we obtained from the various institutions we canvassed. The list is not exhaustive and should be regarded as giving only a broad indication of the kinds of studies presently in progress.

Appendix E is an analysis of the continuing education studies identified in the lists of unpublished degree and diploma studies compiled by Keith Pickens.

The dominance of studies in the areas of teacher education and the university is obvious. A large number of studies have also been conducted in the industrial training area, but these studies are diverse and it is difficult to tie them together.

The research gaps indicated by Appendix E seem obvious. Although technical institutes and community colleges collectively provide for the largest number of post-school students (see Table 2 of Appendix C), relatively few degree or diploma studies have been carried out in this area. Secondary school evening class programmes cater for almost 100,000 adult learners, yet only one study in this field is on record. Although state departments other than Education make a large contribution to the field, only agricultural extension has received any real attention as a postgraduate study topic.

There appears also to be a singular lack of research directed towards the key issues of continuing education methodology and curricula. In fact, only the teachers' colleges and universities have paid any serious attention to the former, but there has been an increasing tendency for methodological papers of a fairly straightforward kind (and which might not be called 'research' in any strict sense of the word) to appear in *Continuing Education in New Zealand*. The most significant piece of curriculum research is probably Hunt's recent study of trade mathematics. It may be fair, however,

to classify some ongoing research in readability of correspondence material (both at Massey and at the Technical Correspondence Institute) as methodological. Nevertheless, experimental work in this field has been almost non-existent.

Of course, some kinds of material are difficult to classify. The Correspondence School, for example, has completed studies of its adult students who have been working towards school-level examinations, and has produced comparative figures for the examination pass rates of adult students studying through face-to-face evening classes. Such studies, however, fall far short of the detail and sophistication characteristic of the classic Parkyn study of success and failure in the universities; and so does the material prepared and published by the Vice Chancellor's Committee on current university students. Again, statistical reporting of this kind is perhaps better regarded as base line data, rather than research itself.

Regrettably, there has been insufficient time for an analysis of the material which has been compiled by New Zealand students in the educational administration programme of the University of New England, nor for an analysis of similar studies which have been undertaken by educational administration students in New Zealand universities.

On the whole, research studies of the historical kind have occupied a larger and stronger part of the continuing education research field than have studies of any other kind; and while we have referred only to Williams' more recent work, there has been historical investigation carried from as far back as the earlier studies of A.B. Thompson, E. Campbell, D.O.W. Hall, and up to the more recent and specialist monograph by J.A. Dakin on community centres.

Finally, the New Zealand Council for Educational Research has a long-established interest in vocational and professional research - in particular in regard to the study of school leavers and the placement of graduates in the work force. Offenberger's study of technicians, recently published by NZCER, is likely to constitute a major contribution while the establishment of the Adult Education Unit (noted previously) is sure to permit the Council to develop its contribution to continuing education research, in a co-ordinated and systematic fashion.

Conclusions

The comments offered here present only a slender and casual overview of research concerned with continuing education and, therefore the drawing of conclusions may seem a little premature - perhaps even impertinent. Be that as it may, we would like to think that those interested in the field will give as much attention to the appendices as they do to the comments offered and perhaps, with whatever additional information they may have available, arrive at their own conclusions.

From our point of view, however, the chief conclusion to be drawn is that the research available looks at best like a pattern of islands scattered in unknown seas. In the field of continuing education we have merely begun to scratch the surface and to establish parameters within which future research can be carried out.

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Appendix B: Agencies Providing Continuing Education

In New Zealand, the providers of continuing education fall into two groups: (1) national organisations, and (2) regional and local organisations. Each of these two groups can be further divided.

1 National Organisations

I Organisations engaged in facilitating, co-ordinating, administering and providing continuing education resources. (e.g., The Education Department, The National Council of Adult Education, The Maori Education Foundation).

II Organisations engaged directly in continuing education. (e.g., The Correspondence School, The Extramural Studies Department of Massey University).

III Other organisations which direct some of their energies towards continuing education. (e.g., The Churches Education Commission, The New Zealand Industrial Design Council, The New Zealand Theatre Federation Inc.).

IV Organisations whose continuing education programmes are directed to special groups and, as such, not generally open to the public. (e.g., The New Zealand Police Department, The New Zealand Society of Accountants, The Tutor Training Unit).

2 Regional and Local Organisations

I Organisations not (generally) engaged in continuing education as such, but involved in facilitating co-ordinating or administering. (e.g., Art Galleries, Citizens' Advice Bureau).

II Educational organisations engaged directly in continuing education. (e.g., Teachers' Colleges, Technical Institutes, Counselling Centres, Sports Bodies).

Table 1: Recent Expenditure on Tertiary Education
(Rounded to nearest half million)

Institution	1976	1977	1978	1979
Universities	93m	110.5m	122.5m	138m
Teachers Colleges	45m	48m	47.5m	53m
Technical Colleges	36m	43m)		
Community Colleges	1.5m	2m)	52.5m	62.5m
		)		

Source: Estimates

Note: Not adjusted for inflation.

Table 2: Numbers of Students Attending Tertiary Sectors of Education System
(Both full and part-time)

Institution	1976	1977	1978
Universities (including extramural)	46,421	47,178	48,511
Teachers Colleges (including kindergarten)	7,521	6,837	6,234
Technical Colleges and Community Colleges (Also Technical Correspondence Institute)	123,873	123,457	141,770

Source: E-1

Table 3: Annual Research Grants (1000s of $)

Institution	1976	1977	1978	1979
Universities	250	500	750	750
NZCER	379	456	493	544
Education Department	-	215	205	223

Source: Estimates

Table 4: Growth in Numbers of Adult Students Learning by Correspondence

Institution	1976	1977	1978
Technical Correspondence School	21,712	22,022	26,404
Correspondence School	5,437	6,558	9,212
Massey University (Extramural)	6,314	6,099	6,488

Appendix D: Recent Research in Continuing Education

In order to obtain information about research currently in progress, we circulated a questionnaire to appropriate institutions. The list below is based on the replies received.

1 Continuing Education Research in the Universities

I Auckland University

Higher Education Research Office: Research into University Teaching and Learning.

Careers Advisory Service: Destination of Graduates.

Centre for Continuing Education and the Education Department of Auckland University: Disadvantaged Readers, New Start for Mature Students, Adult Assessment, Survey of Clients' Needs, Growth of Knowledge and Inequality in New Zealand.

II University of Waikato

Education Department: Changing Teacher Behaviour, Continuing Education of Parents via Radio.

III Massey University

Education Department: Hawkes Bay Community College (New Zealand Department of Education contract), Trade Mathematics (New Zealand Department of Education Contract).

Extension Studies: Adult Education 1945-75.

IV Victoria University

University Teaching and Resource Centre: Teaching and Learning, Keller Principles and Mathematics courses.

Extension Studies: Survey of Present Education Resources in England.

V Canterbury University

Education Department: RNZAF University Scheme, Adult Students at Hagley, Nursing Studies and Nursing Education, Age Differences in the memory of Students.

Extension Studies: Adult Students at Hagley High.

Education Research and Advisory Unit: Internal Publications on Non-Graduates and Assessment.

VI Lincoln College

Careers Advisory Office: Destination of Ex-Students.

VII Otago University

Department of Education: Evening Classes for Adults, Adults at Three Institutions.

Higher Education Development Centre: Educational Technology in Industry in New Zealand, Tutor Student Interaction in Distance Education.

2 Continuing Education Research in the Technical Institutes

I Christchurch Technical Institute

Lathe Measurement Exercise/Study.

II Technical Correspondence Institute

Readability of TCI Assignments, English for Polynesians.

III Central Institute of Technology

Readability of Textbooks.

IV Hawkes Bay Community College

Study of Hawkes Bay students.

V Auckland Technical Institute

Evaluation of DECAL.

3 Continuing Education Research in the Teachers Colleges

I Auckland Secondary

Curriculum Research Project in Music Education.

II Palmerston North

Evaluation of AST unit courses.

III Wellington

The Impact of the new Unit Policy on WTC Programmes, Micro teaching in Student Teacher Training, Self Instructional Audio-visual Modules.

IV Christchurch

End-on and Concurrent Teacher Training.

V Dunedin

The Effects of the New B.Ed. Programmes.

4 Continuing Education Research in Statutory Bodies

I Education Department

Hawkes Bay Community College Survey, Continuing Education Survey, Adult Learning Activities in Christchurch, Retraining courses for women in Technical Institutes, Evaluation of Technical Institute Nurse Training, Trade Mathematics.

II Vocational Training Council

Effectiveness of VTC Supervisory Training, Nature and Extent of Clerical Training, Career Opportunities for Women in the Apparel Industry, Study of Female Apprentices in Electronics Industry, Case Studies in the Multicultural Work Force, Work Outcome Preferences in Three Cultures, The Hiring Process in the Multicultural Workforce, A Study of Labour Stability Cross Culturally.

III New Zealand Council for Educational Research

Parkyn Follow-Up, Evaluation of Apprenticeship Courses, Teachers on Fiji Scheme of Cooperation, Survey of Technician Training, Vocational Guidance of School Leavers, Readability of Long Distance Learning Study Materials, Development and Evaluation of a Civil Flight Instructors IT Course, Vocational Language Training for Migrants, Fire Service Selection, Study Habits for Tertiary Students.

5 Continuing Education Research in Voluntary Associations

I New Zealand Education Institute

Research into Rural Community Attitudes to Education.

II University Students Association

Income and Expenditure on Tertiary Education.

Appendix E: Analysis of Topics of Degree and Diploma Studies of Continuing Education 1970-79

			Number of Studies
1	Institutions Studied		
	I	Secondary School Extension Programmes	1
	II	Adults Returning to Secondary Schools	1
	III	University - Full Time or Part Time	19
	IV	University Extension Programmes	3
	V	University Extramural Enrolments	2
	VI	Teachers College, Teacher Research, In-service Training	79
	VII	Technical Institute and Community Colleges	6
	VIII	Correspondence Organisations	-
	IX	Radio New Zealand Continuing Education Unit	-
	X	Public Libraries, NZCER, Statutory Bodies	-
2	Voluntary Organization Studied		
	I	WEA	-
	II	Country Women's Co-ordinating Committee	1
	III	Playcentre Movement	-
	IV	Marriage Guidance Council	-
	V	Wairarapa Community Action Programme	-
	VI	Nelson Community Education Service	-
	VII	Learning Exchanges	-
	VIII	Community Services	25
3	Training Studied		
	I	Industrial Training Service	19
	II	Industry Training Boards	7
	III	State Services Commission	2
	IV	Government Departments	19
	V	NZ Institute of Management	-
	VI	NZ Ballet School	-
	VII	NZ Drama School	-
	VIII	Professional Associations	5

Note: This is, of course, not a complete analysis as a number of studies were no doubt unidentified - which probably suggests that more care is required in the selection of descriptive titles for university theses.

Source: Derived from Pickens, K.A. *Unpublished Degree and Diploma Studies in Education*, New Zealand Journal of Educational Studies, 10, 2; 11; 14, 1.